

**Johnson Long-term Recovery Plan  
Chair/Co-chair Coordination Meeting**

11/11/24

5:00 PM-6:15 PM

**ATTENDANCE:**

Adrienne Parker, Co-chair, Downtown Reconfiguration and Redevelopment Committee

Paul Warden, Co-chair, Downtown Reconfiguration and Redevelopment Committee

Kathy Black, Co-chair, Recreation Economic Development Committee

Diana Osborne, Co-chair, Recreation Economic Development Committee

Jessie Whitworth, Chair, Food Access Committee

Sonya Kivela, Chair, College/Town Connection Committee

Emma Fernandez, Co-chair, College/Town Connection Committee

Laura Cavin Bailey, Vermont Council on Rural Development

Mark Leese, Community Assistance Planner, FEMA

**OBJECTIVE:**

- Provide a forum for the 5 committees to report to each other about their discussions and findings.

**TOPICS COVERED:**

**Recreation Economic Development Committee:** Kathy reported that the committee wants to improve Johnson's access to nature and economic development. Members of the committee have been looking at past plans and are developing an inventory of assets. They expect to generate recommendations regarding improvements like lighting at Old Mill Park, trail connections, etc. They are talking to the college. They have reached out to Paul Warden and Johnson Recreation staff, asking how they can build new programs, how to communicate to people and visitors about assets, collecting thoughts about a brochure, marketing, branding, and how to talk to people in town. Diana has questions about how the committee will work with the Town and Village administration and boards, write grant applications, etc. Diana wants to learn about good ideas from other towns. She asked if the other towns that VCRD is assisting could convene a meeting and compare notes. Laura responded said it could be done. Diana suggested a lunch with representatives of the ATV community.

**Downtown Reconfiguration and Redevelopment Committee:** Paul wants to know how their work can be supported by FEMA and how their efforts fit into the "FEMA process". The committee wants to map the buy-outs properties to better understand how they might be repurposed. The Planning Commission completed a draft Municipal Plan for the town and village, which the Selectboard and Trustees have approved of – both boards need one more public meeting. The Plan has multiple chapters that parallel the Reimagine Johnson task forces. The JPC's goal was to make the Plan more actionable than previous versions and ultimately hope there will a task force for each chapter. Adrienne talked to UVM, who will choose two towns for study by their flood modeling group. The Committee will meet with Melissa Manka at the Lamoille County Planning Commission regarding their flood mapping efforts. The LCPC will be looking at locations for water storage and estimating how water storage will be possible.

**Food Access Committee:** Jessie reported that the committee has been very productive, is working on a gap analysis, and is looking at alternative models for food access. Efforts to understand the Sterling Market situation has been put on pause for now. The committee is looking at spaces, ideas for a monthly community meal program, farms, farmstands, and communications. The next meeting will feature presentations by food co-ops in the area. Last week, the committee visited the food shelter, and is thinking about ways to improve their operation. A local resident, Mike is planning on purchasing the “Get Yours” building on the edge of town and renovating it for a grocery and deli.

**College/Town Connection Committee:** The committee is sorting out what it can do and how to go about it, possible organizational models, who at the college to talk to about their future plans, etc. They would like to see a bulletin board, or boards placed around town for communicating about community events held at the college, etc. They are looking at communications, marketing, and branding. Kathy added that Lois Fry has a key to the bulletin board, which is still in use, at the post office. The committee is concerned with how to communicate internally (among the committees) and to the rest of the world. Jessie suggested there could be a bi-weekly newsletter that would provide an opportunity to identify overlaps in interests among the committees.

**Housing Committee:** Laura reported that on 11/21, the committee will meet via Zoom with representatives of Evernorth and Downstreet, two affordable housing developers. Meeting details will be posted on the VCRD Imagine Johnson web page.

**Other Items:**

- Website: Paul reported that the Town’s website is now available and free to the committees for posting information. Lydia manages the Town’s website.
- Meeting locations: Earlier, the college had said that the committees would have to pay \$50 to use meeting rooms, or else would have to use one of the public meeting spaces such as the TV lounge, and that there is no WIFI availability. But now it appears that these limitations may be evolving.
- Newsletter: Mark offered to format summaries from the 5 committees on a monthly basis into a newsletter to be distributed to the entire committee membership. Samantha will provide this service.
- FEMA Assistance: Mark related the discussion at the joint Select Board/Trustee meeting on 10/30 and described how he could support the committees as they work on aspects of the Long-term Recovery Plan, what the process looks like, project descriptions, evaluation criteria, schedule, and the benefits to the community of organizing the projects into a single plan document.

Meeting adjourned.